Plate IX

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Young Tuareg woman of noble class brushing her teeth with an irak stem. Notice behind her the mat called asaber used to surround the tent.

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Young Tuareg couple seated in the shelter of the asaber. Behind them is a household servant, a taklit of Sudanese origin.

423 When pasture is scarce as the result of a long dry period, an
621 understanding is reached between the different tribal chiefs, and
311 one of them may authorize the other's tribe to come nomadize on his territory, on the condition, of course, that they not do any damage, mutilate the trees, or engage in hunting.

185 When a region has been abundantly favored by rain, the amrar
423 decrees the land forbidden -- ganent. No one can go there, in-
621 cluding the people of the tribe. This measure is designed to protect
311 young growths from the teeth of the animals and let the pasture grow to maturity. A few weeks later the interdiction is raised, the land is free, and anyone, without distinction, may profit from it, always conforming, of course, to the jurisdiction /sic/ concerning the protection of trees and to the hunting interdiction.

423 Animals straying on the land of a neighboring tribe are /256/
621 returned to their owners without the intervention of any sanction.
685 But when a flock is surprised on ganent land, the owner is fined one head of livestock -- one goat if it is a flock of goats, one sheep if it is a flock of sheep, one camel if it is a herd of camels.

[185] A branch cut by a member of a neighboring tribe entails a fine of one goat or one sheep. This rule is not often applied, however, for the Tuareg have little respect for the protection of trees.

/257/

Chapter 7

Care of the Body and Bodily Habits

● 515 Cleanliness and care of the body. -- In a country where water is scarce, it is natural that the people are not inclined to wash every day. The Tuareg, through living in the desert far from wells, have lost the habit of washing themselves. It is not that they despise

515 care given to the body, but they find washing completely useless and even disastrous to health. They even claim that if they washed [826] every day they would become ill. Their argument is that daily ablutions of the limbs make the skin scale off.

751 For them the main question is protecting the different parts of the body from the rigors of the sun. All the care that they give the body is to that end.

291 They are in the habit of wearing clothing of material heavily
302 dyed with indigo which comes off on the skin, giving it a dark-blue color. Far from trying to remove this dye by washing, they become prouder of themselves as the layer of blue becomes thicker. They rub their limbs and faces with new materials to obtain the desired color.

302 To make their skin softer and more brilliant they smear their [171] limbs with a fatty substance, butter or animal fat. This custom is also adopted by Sudanese Negroes and the desert Arabs.

515 The Tuareg pay the most attention to the mouth and teeth. [412] They rinse out their mouths with a lot of water after each meal and brush their teeth with little branches which have one end chewed [824] to form a brush. For this purpose they use irak branches (Salvadora persica) or palm jereed.

/258/ The men and women are very fastidious about caring
302 for the hair.

Young boys have their heads shaved except for a crest or tuft of hair left on the top. Men wear long braided hair, with a little halo shaved on the front of the head. They have their hair dressed [593] by their sisters or their female friends, in return for which they offer [276] them a bit of tobacco. The hair styles vary from region to region. [184] They may include a greater or lesser number of braids; the braids may hang down in back or be lifted to the top of the head. At a [882] certain age, when the hair begins to get grey, the men have themselves shaved completely.

302 The women also wear their hair braided in a number of plaits which hang beside the temples. They coif each other, and since the job requires many hours, it is done only once or twice a month. [412] They begin by untangling the hair by means of a small comb, at the same time filling the hair with sand and wood ashes. Next they [515] proceed to delouse it, for each Tuareg head of hair generally harbors a whole little world of insects. Then the hairdresser separates the hair into bunches, using a small knife, soaks it with water and butter, and braids it, either in large braids so that there are three or four hanging on each side, or in many small braids. [751] They smear their hair with butter for no other reason than to protect it against the sun and especially against the dry air which makes it brittle.

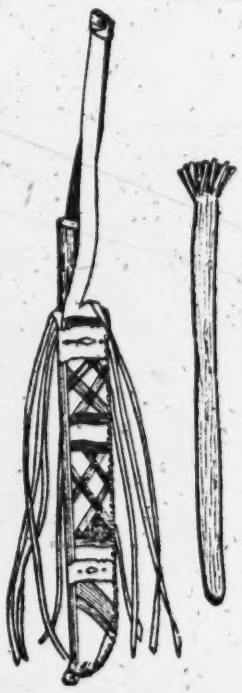

Fig. 35. Tooth brush of irak wood with its leather case.

The men let their beards grow, but they almost always shave their mustaches or cut them very short so /259/ that they do not get in the way under the veils which cover the lower part of their faces.

[754] Men and women shave the pubis.

After dressing the hair or shaving, the Tuareg always bury their hair or down, for fear that people who wish them harm might get hold of them and take them to some sorcerer who could use them to make fearful evil spells.

114 sult, and the Tuareg have been among the most spectacular victims.

The famous veil of these great desert warriors (figs. 25, 26, and 51) has cast its shadow of romantic mystery not only over the faces of its wearers but over their whole culture, and so both opportunity and temptation to romanticize have overcome to some extent many of those who have written about the Tuareg tribes. In the summer of 1956 the author heard a well-known public lecturer and traveler, who had even been to Tamanrasset for a few days, declare to his unsuspecting audience of honest New England farmers that the Tuareg are probably descended from a little band of crusaders who got cut off in the rock-walled valley of Petra (in what is now the Kingdom of Jordan), whence they finally escaped and found their way (heaven knows how) clear across Africa to the mountains of the Ahaggar. He added that Tuareg men are [141] about 7 feet tall—and he was speaking in a church—although the tallest one so far recorded measured just over 6 feet 5½ inches, while the average Targui stands only about 5 feet 8 in his sandal-feet (*see* table A-2).

114 Tuareg morality and personal hygiene have
515 been the subjects of hardly less exaggeration. Several generations of frustrated readers have by now found vicarious satisfaction in titillating tales of the great ladies of the Ahaggar, beautiful of face and graceful, gracious and unclean, skilled in the arts of love, poetry and music, fascinating and refined and evil-smelling. These unattractively attractive custodians of a spuriously antique chivalrous tradition have been said to welcome to their bosoms and their beds nearly all socially presentable admirers, while their docile husbands stand modestly aside and show their good breeding by
114 concealing their emotions. Few authors seem to have been bothered by the glaring contrast between this rather pitiful picture of long-suffering patience and the very different one that they usually present only a few pages earlier, in which we see the fire-breathing knights of the Ahaggar, those seven-foot sons of the flower of Christian chivalry, busily chasing each other up and down the rocky mountain slopes when there doesn't happen to be anyone else around to kill. But this contrast bothers us—surely there must be something wrong somewhere. So let us take a

291 Tuareg attach considerable importance to
[439] indigo blue cotton cloth, a product which they get from the Sudan. This material is commonly known as "chegga" (pronounced *shegga*), and the most archaic and highly prized variety is made of a multitude of long strips about an inch wide sewn tightly together. The cloth itself, of very ordinary quality, is so heavily impregnated with crude indigo as to be literally stiff with it. A brand new piece looks black when seen at a distance or in a poor light, but in bright sunlight it is a dark purplish blue with a coppery sheen like that of cheap carbon paper; and the indigo dye comes off on your fingers at the slightest touch, just as the ink on carbon paper does but much more so.

302 Obviously, anyone who wears clothes made of such material is soon stained with indigo from head to foot, and the Tuareg even rub it into their skins on purpose. Women often smear it on their foreheads, cheeks and temples and around their mouths by way of make-up. The
[751] Tuareg claim that indigo not only protects human skin from the direct effects of sun and wind but also lubricates it and so prevents cracking, and they are quite right, at least up
● [515] to a point. If the Tuareg wash themselves only very rarely, it is partly to preserve the accumulated protective coating of indigo, the humble practical value of which has been
[554] gradually enhanced by an ever-increasing value of prestige that has risen in proportion to the rising cost of indigo-dyed cloth. A dirty looking, bluish skin is admired by the Tuareg just as much as a rich golden tan is admired in midwinter by the business men and women of New England and New York.

515 It should be noted that in the Sahara Desert proper one can go unwashed for long periods without either feeling or looking noticeably dirty. The air is so dry that perspiration usually evaporates instantly upon reaching the surface of the skin, and so it is unusual for anyone to sweat visibly. Most of the nomadic
[147] natives are in excellent physical condition in that they are very lean and wiry, and so they sweat relatively little in any case. Thus it is extremely rare to meet one who has any perceptible body odor at all, regardless of whether he looks clean or not. White foreigners are seldom in anywhere near as good physi-

515 cal condition, and they appear to sweat much more, perhaps in part because nearly all of them persist in maintaining their European eating and drinking habits. There is a strong hint here that a systematic investigation of the relationship between diet and sweat loss in the Sahara might produce some very interesting and useful results.

When an Arab nomad of the northern Desert goes to town, the first thing he usually does is to head for the public baths and get himself thoroughly steamed and scrubbed all over, but the Ahaggar Tuareg almost never visit any town big enough to have public or even private baths. A few permanent waterholes and a number of seasonal ones are to be found, however, scattered thinly through most of the Ahaggar massif, and the Tuareg of the region make use of such pools occasionally, though perhaps not quite as often as do their cousins of the Aïr, of whom Rodd (1926, p. 163) wrote as follows: "In justice to my friends, I must admit that they washed their clothing, and especially their white trousers, very frequently, and when they washed their person, they did so very thoroughly from head to foot, with much rubbing and a prodigious splashing of volumes of water." The Tuareg of the Ahaggar, women as well as men, wash themselves with equal gusto when they wash at all, and this is not the kind of thing that one would expect of people who have any real dislike or fear of water as such.

And finally it should be noted that among Saharan peoples in general, including the Tuareg of the Ahaggar, bodily cleanliness seems to show a pretty uniform positive correlation with economic status, as it so often does elsewhere in the world.

567 **Racial Minorities, Parasitic Groups and Race Mixture.** We have already gone far enough into the question of slavery in the Ahaggar so that not much remains to be said about it here beyond a brief summing up of the situation. The slaves are almost all Negro captives from the Sudan, or the descendants of such captives. They are chattels which can be bought, sold and inherited, and they do all the manual labor and housework around the camp and also acts as shepherds. A slave can seldom marry without the permission of his master, who usually advances the necessary

The laws of hospitality, "amedjarou," are observed as 574
among all Moslems. The guest, "amadjar," is always well
received.

Chapter XVI

Hygiene. Diseases

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Dautheville

Dr. Dautheville in the Abezzou Wadi (White Tifedest)

We know that the Tuareg have a horror of water. They do 515
not wash themselves on the pretext that this would make them
sick, but it is essentially because they are very sensitive to [151]
cold. To say their prayers, they do not indulge in the pre- [782
scribed ablutions, even when they are at home and have water 788]
at their disposal. They are content with "ta'moum" (an
imitation of washing with sand), which they call "ettamine."
The amenokal Moussa ag /31/ Amastane is the only Tuareg
whom I have seen making his ablutions with water.

This is also doubtless due to the fact that the Tuareg like 241
to keep the tint of indigo, "sedjeni" ⵙⴹⵊⵏⵉ , on their 302
skins, the result of wearing 'ichegga," or blue cotton, which 396
runs a great deal and of which they make their clothes. They 515

claim that this blue tint is excellent for the health. As in the Tidikelt, a white garment is not fit to wear until it has been sufficiently tinted blue by contact with "chegga."

The Tuareg value our medicines, "asafar" ⵓⵙⴼⴰⵔ plural "isefran" ⵉⵙⴼⵔⴰⵏ, and believe in their efficacy. This is also due to the fact that they are given to them free, for under no circumstances does the Tuareg like to loosen his purse strings, and he never ceases to beg for anything he sees that he hopes to get for nothing.

However this may be, it is good to note that he comes very willingly to be treated by us. A French doctor would certainly be very well received by the Tuareg.

The most usual diseases among them are fever, "tazzaq" ⵜⴰⵣⵣⴰⵇ, gonorrhea, "talaoaït;" rheumatism, "tessemdhi" ⵜⵙⵙⵎⴷⵉ; and headaches, "tekmou-n-ir'ef" ⵜⴽⵎⵓⵏⵉⵔⵄⴼ.

Chapter XVII

Negroes and Negresses

There is no Tuareg tent which has not at least its negro and negress. The frequent raids that the Ahaggar made in the Niger and in the Sudan procured them all the slaves they have.

They devoted themselves greatly to the Negro trade, which brought them fine profits since they had only to take the negroes without expense.

The conquest of the Sudan and the Saharan Oases gave them a terrible blow from that standpoint. Besides, with the progressive pacification of their territory and that of the neighboring tribes subject to them, they would soon have to renounce all hope of new raids, and one may say that the Negro trade, if not entirely destroyed, will at least be considerably diminished.

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

Imrad (sing. *Amerid*). People of this class are sometimes called "serfs" in literature, but the word "vassals" is also used. I prefer to use the latter term, but add that the word *Imrad* is most difficult to translate into an European language. The vassal class is represented in all groups with the exception of the *Kel Geres*. Among the Northern Tuareg and also among the *Iwllemmeden* the word *Kel Ulli* (sing. *Agg Ulli*) is used synonymously with *Imrad*. Among south-western Tuareg around Timbuktu the word *Daga* or *Dara* is also used to designate vassals. The *Imrad* class is by far the most numerous in most groups. The relationship between these vassals (*Imrad*) and the noble Tuareg (*Ihaggaren, Imajeren*) forms the basis of most political systems which are described later (p. 393 ff.).

Members of the above-mentioned classes are true Tuareg, though the word *Inesleimen* is also used for marabuts of other peoples and for marabuts of various black-skinned castes found among the Tuareg. Among the Northern Tuareg all people of the above-mentioned classes with the exception of certain *Inesleimen* or marabuts are called *Imuhar* (sing. *Amahar*). The Ayr Tuareg have no such common term to designate the people known to us as *Tuareg*, but occasionally they use generically the word *Imajeren* though strictly speaking this term should be reserved for Tuareg of the supreme noble class.

The word *Tuareg* (sing. *Targi*) is never used by the Tuareg themselves, but by Arabs. Duveyrier claims it to be derived from an Arabic word of the root *terek* meaning "to abandon". The meaning of the word accordingly should be "those abandoned (by God)", and should refer to the fact that many Tuareg do not follow Islamic rules very strictly (Duveyrier 1864, p. 317 f.). The same explanation has also been given to me by an Arab of the *Ulad Ba Hammu* tribe of Tidikelt. However, the origin of the word "*Tuareg*" is perhaps a different one: – It may be related to the word *Targa* (Ayr) or *Targa* (Ahaggar and Tasili-n-Ajjer), which name is used by the Tuareg to designate the part of the Sahara generally known to us by the Arabic word *Fezzan*. This is very likely, as we know from Arab authors of the Middle Ages that the word *Targa* or *Targa* was then used as a name for a very important Tuareg group living in that area and adjacent regions (cf. Benhazera 1908, p. 83 f.; Foucauld 1951 52. II. p. 534; Rodd 1926a, p. 273 f.).

The Tuareg are fair-skinned people who in certain regions and particularly in the south have mixed with Negroes. The Northern Tuareg are predominantly fair-skinned, and many of them are as "white" as Europeans though perhaps a little yellowish or brownish. It is difficult to determine their exact skin colour because they are burned and tanned by the sun and the hot wind characteristic of desert climate. In addition, the Tuareg wear clothes dyed with indigo which comes off on the body, and they rarely wash. When I lived among them my own skin-colour and that of the Tuareg were practically identical. Among the Ayr Tuareg there are also many fair-skinned people, but the Ayr Tuareg are more mixed with Negroes than the Northern Tuareg, and most *Kel Ewey* are predominantly negroid. Very mixed also are the *Kel Geres* and the same seems to hold for other Tuareg groups of the south. A few blond individuals have been recorded from the *Kel Ajjer* living around the oases of Rat and Radames, and they may be the offspring of unions between Tuareg women and caravan traders of the north (cf. Lhote 1955a, p. 162 f.). The blond individuals met in Southern Ayr are the offspring of the fairly numerous marriages between Frenchmen and Tuareg women, but it is claimed that a few years ago a very blond girl was born to parents of families which had never contracted marriages